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MAB 066
1 April 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS
THROUGH : Chief, Operations Group
SUBJECT : Monthly Report--Abidjan Bureau--March 1981

I. GENERAL

For several weeks, Ivorian police have been engaged in wide-ranging and more or less indiscriminate roundups of non-Ivorian Africans residing in Abidjan and its immediate suburbs in the name of fighting a rising wave of crime, for which the foreigners are blamed. These roundups have caused considerable concern among the bureau staff, many of whom are non-Ivorian, particularly for those working the evening shift since police checkpoints are fairly common on the streets late at night. Bureau operations were only slightly disrupted by these measures in March, when a bureau driver spent a few days in jail pending full identification and thus failed to pick up personnel for a Monday morning shift. However, as a precaution, the evening shift editor has been instructed to close the bureau on time all but cases of the most serious crises to ensure that personnel are home before police checkpoints go into operation. (C)

II. OPERATIONS

A. Editorial/Monitorial

1. Cruising monitors [redacted] of Nicosia Bureau and [redacted] of Tel Aviv Bureau paid a TDY visit to Abidjan from 14 to 30 March to conduct a long-awaited comprehensive cruising survey. The objectives of their visit were to catalogue the bureau's current voice and radio teletype reception capabilities, making recommendations for changes or additions to coverage and possible changes or additions to the bureau's antenna array where appropriate, to provide some training to Abidjan's monitors in basic cruising techniques, and to determine the suitability of Dakar as a possible remote monitoring site for some of the weaker transmitters in northwest Africa such as those in Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and Gambia.

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As a result of the survey, a number of recommendations were made for noise reduction measures and other engineering work. The team was also able to at least partially resolve the bureau's problems with reception of Dakar radio, permitting resumption of coverage of the main evening newscast on medium wave after it had become inaudible on shortwave some months ago. Also among the cruising team's objectives was to check for Libyan broadcasts to the Sahel region and for Islamic propaganda broadcasts to Africa generally. No such broadcasts were found, however, despite prolonged efforts.

From Abidjan, [] went on to Dakar at the end of the month, where he will spend the first few days of April checking that location's potential as a remote monitoring site. (U)

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2. On the morning of 16 March, the bureau was alerted by the Wire to the fact that the Presidential Palace in Nouakchott, Mauritania, was under fire. An open watch was immediately instituted on Nouakchott radio, and an hour later the radio carried an announcement saying that a commando group armed by a "foreign power" had attacked the country but had been repulsed. Subsequently, the prime minister made a short speech charging that Morocco had sponsored the attack, but that the armed forces had arrested those who took part in the action. A curfew was imposed and AFP reported from Dakar that the airport had been closed. The bureau received a message from the U.S. Embassy in Nouakchott on the day of the attack calling FBIS reporting on the subject of "great value" and asking that it be continued in spite of the communications minimize that had been imposed on the post. The leaders of the attack, former Mauritanian military officers accused of being in the pay of Morocco, were executed a few days later. (U)

B. Communications

The prolonged outage of the Skylink system resulting from a technical breakdown in the Abidjan Embassy's terminal in late January was finally resolved and the bureau's main communications circuit was fully restored on the night of 11 March. The circuit has been highly reliable since then. (C)

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III. ADMINISTRATION

Personnel

1. Bureau Engineer [] departed Abidjan on lateral transfer to Caversham on 27 March. [] who had worked as the bureau's part-time administrative and financial assistant, departed earlier, on 12 March, to visit her family in the States before rejoining Frank in England. (U)
2. Two bureau employees progressed from trainee to journeyman status during March. Teletype operator [] was promoted to FSN-7/1 effective 2 March, and English/French monitor [] was promoted to FSN-3/1 on 23 March. (U)
3. English French monitor [] returned to work from maternity leave on 12 March. (U)
4. The Embassy was advised on 2 March of Department of State's formal approval of the MODE ceiling increase at Abidjan Bureau to permit hiring of a Spanish/Portuguese monitor. An excellent candidate with long experience as a free-lance translator has been processed, but the long delays associated with the recent hiring freeze prompted her to accept temporary contract work, which will prevent her from starting with FBIS until May. (C)

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Chief, Abidjan Bureau

Attachment: Monthly Production Report

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ABIDJAN BUREAU

MONTHLY PRODUCTION REPORT FOR MARCH 1981

1. COVERAGE (Priority 1 and 2)
 - a. Average daily hours of voice - 12.5
 - b. Average daily hours of press service - 42
 - c. Average daily hours of press - 4
(1/2 hour per paper)
2. Production (English)
 - a. Average daily voice wordage 1,142
 - b. Average daily press service wordage 555
 - c. Average daily newspapers 87
3. Production (French)
 - a. Average daily voice wordage 1,344
 - b. Average daily press service wordage 1,286
 - c. Average daily newspapers
4. Total Average Daily Publishable Wordage (2 plus 3) 4,414
5. Total daily average wordage of multipaper, multilanguage
and/or multisource roundups, program summaries filed as
a continuing requirement; commentary lists; cruising
messages: 345
6. Total Daily Average Filed wordage (4 plus 5) 4,759
7. Total number of ETG Abstracts for Month NA
8. Total number of items for month 481